

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
A Summary of New Provisions
(July 26, 2006)

The 2006 Reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins Act) acknowledges the changing needs of a workforce that participates in a global economy. The Conference Report contains several new provisions to help bring new and advanced skills to the high school and college student and the new and returning worker.

Purpose: The Conference Report builds upon the 1998 reauthorization and its emphasis on integration of academic and technical skills. The Perkins Act will now include a new focus that highlights the role of challenging academic and technical standards in preparing students for “high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations in current or emerging professions.”

Formula: The Conference Report adjusts the Federal to State formula to better respond to population growth and it allows for an increase in funding to small states. The new formula is triggered when appropriations rise above FY2006 funding levels.

Structure: The Conference Report, unlike the House bill, does not consolidate the Basic State Grant and the Tech-Prep program. Instead, the Conference Report retains the separate authorization in current law, and gives States the choice of continuing a Tech Prep Program.

Program Performance: The Conference Report establishes performance indicators for secondary and post-secondary programs. Every year, local career and technical education programs will have to meet and report on attainment of established levels of performance relating to the academic and technical skills; graduation rates; technical credentials and post-secondary program participation; apprenticeship and employment rates; and student participation in non-tradition fields. By establishing separate performance indicators, students, teachers and the public will have information on the quality and success of career and technical programs at the state and local level and whether these programs are meeting local workforce needs. State and local programs must now report performance by student population for each of these indicators.

Accountability: The Conference Report demands greater accountability by State education agencies and local programs for career and technical education programs. New accountability systems at the state and local level require programs to develop improvement plans to address deficiencies in performance. If these improvement plans are not carried out and if programs fail to meet 90 percent of one or more of the performance indicators after three or more years, funds may be withheld from programs.

Career and Technical Programs of Study: The Conference Report requires States to develop Career and Technical Programs of Study that guide students on the core curriculum necessary to achieve proficiency in career and technical education programs. Similar to the concept of “Career Pathways”, Career and Technical Programs of Study incorporate both secondary and postsecondary education elements and must lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Math, Science, and Technology: The Conference Report increases the role of math, science and technology in career and technical education programs and encourages expanded use of technology by teachers and faculty.

Graduation and Career Plans: The Conference Report allows secondary programs to design graduation and career plans as tools to help students focus on future goals and guide educational decisions critical to graduation, participation in post-secondary education or entry into a high skill, high wage, high demand career.

Professional Development: The Conference Report requires States to plan for joint curriculum development by academic and career and technical teachers and to support activities resulting in increased teacher certification in academic and technical proficiencies.

Performance Incentive Grants: The Conference Report allows States to provide incentive grants to local programs for exemplary performance.

Name Change: The Conference Report, in responding to the evolution of vocational education programs at the state and local level, officially changes the name of the Act and authorized program from “Vocational Education” to “Career and Technical Education”.

Other new state and local uses of funds:

Technical Assessments; support for career clusters, career academies, and distance education; entrepreneurship education; teacher recruitment and retention.